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ABSTRACT

Discussing various aspects of the language arts curriculum, this guide contains the following essays: (1) "Listening and the Child in the Language Arts Curriculum," which details a philosophy for teaching and learning in the language arts; (2) "Creative Writing in the Curriculum," which outlines ways teachers can help students achieve creatively; (3) "The Writing Curriculum: Creative Versus Practical," which discusses writing as both a creative and a practical endeavor; (4) "The Handwriting Curriculum," which addresses the behaviorism/humanism dichotomy and other issues regarding handwriting instruction; (5) "Learning Activities in the Language Arts," which presents practical teaching strategies for maximizing students' achievement in the language arts; (6) "Reading Instruction, the Pupil, and the Teacher," which describes how teachers can help individual students achieve at their own optimal level; (7) "Reading in the Science Curriculum," which focuses on word recognition and comprehension skills needed to read in the science curriculum; (8) "Reporting Pupil Progress in Reading," which outlines criteria for conducting parent/teacher conferences; (9) "Recent Trends in the Oral Communication Curriculum," which presents teaching ideas to help develop students' speech proficiency; and (10) "Inservice Education and the Computer," which describes a workshop designed to help teachers develop their computer skills and optimize computer usage in the curriculum. (JD)

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A Guide to the Language Arts
(A Collection of Essays)

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LISTENING AND THE CHILD IN THE LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM

The classroom teacher needs to do much professional reading and study pupils in classroom situations in the area of listening to develop a philosophy of education pertaining to this important receptive skill in the language arts curriculum. A sound philosophy of teaching and learning in the language arts area of listening may well involve the following generalizations:

1. Each pupil can improve over his or her previous performance.
2. Increased skill in listening must be emphasized continually in all curriculum areas of the elementary school.
3. The teacher must plan needed learning experiences which will guide pupils directly in attaining relevant goals in the area of listening.
4. Learning opportunities in listening should be interesting, meaningful, and purposeful for each pupil.
5. Pupils should be guided in noticing the interrelatedness of listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills in the language arts.
6. A well planned appraisal program must be developed to aid in determining if attainable objectives pertaining to listening have been acquired by learners.
7. Pupils should develop appropriate skills pertaining to different purposes in listening such as gaining facts, main ideas, generalizations, directions, sequence of content, as well as to analyze ideas critically and creatively.

Learning Experiences in Listening and the Pupil

Learning experiences involving listening must be selected carefully to guide each pupil in developing optimal achievement. These experiences must be of varied kinds and provide adequately for each child in the class setting. What are selected activities that may be tried in helping each child to become proficient in listening?

1. The teacher could have pupils place their heads face down in their arms on their desks with eyes closed; various sounds may then be made which learners can attempt to identify. The teacher, for example, could crush a piece of paper, tap a pencil on the desk, and pour water from a pitcher into a tumbler. For variation in teaching and learning, a child identifying correctly the kind of sound made may then be in charge of having pupils guess the source of noises produced.
2. The teacher and pupils may use casette recorders to record selected sounds in the home and school environment. Pupils in the class setting may identify causes of the recorded sounds.
3. Pupils with teacher guidance may take an excursion near to the school setting to listen to selected sounds. Thus, learners may identify sparrows chirping, snow slushing, and carpenters building homes.
4. At a learning center, pupils may select a tape recording to listen to. On a task card at this center, pupils may select a specific task to work on. The completed task would involve careful listening to the contents of the tape presentation.
5. Pupils may also play a "gossip" game. Child A whispers to

Child B where he traveled to and one item he saw along the way. Child B repeats in a whisper what he heard to Child C. He also adds one item he saw along the way. The "gossip" continues following this same pattern to several other pupils. Finally, the last child in the committee repeats everything he heard from a whisper. Careful listening on the part of each pupil is important in the learning experience!

6. At a music center in the classroom, pupils may select a musical recording to listen to. Following this learning experience, each pupil at the center may draw a related picture. Pupils individually may also choose to write a poem pertaining to ideas experienced when listening to the musical recording.
7. Pupils with teacher guidance may develop criteria on good listening in the class setting. These criteria may be modified or changed as the need arises. Periodically learners may assess their own achievement in listening in terms of these guidelines.
8. In all curriculum areas in the elementary school, pupils should have ample opportunities to improve skills in the area of listening as well as develop increased proficiency in speaking. The listening vocabulary of the child cannot be separated from the speaking vocabulary.

IN SUMMARY

It is important for teachers to develop a sound philosophy of teaching and learning pertaining to the language arts area of listening.

This provides guidance for the teacher in choosing relevant objectives, learning experiences, and evaluation procedures in the language arts curriculum.

CREATIVE WRITING IN THE CURRICULUM

Each learner needs to achieve optimally in creative endeavors. Why? Improvements come about due to creativity being emphasized by individuals in society. Numerous problems exist in the societal arena. Novel solutions, in many cases, are needed to solve identified problematic situations. What might teachers emphasize as experiences to guide students to achieve well in the creative dimension?

1. Have each student select a picture from among several located at a station. Stimulate the learner to write what happened prior to, or after the subject matter contained in the illustration. Encourage students to share written content.

2. Place several story starters in a box. Motivate each learner to choose a starter and write related sequential sentences to complete the story. Post on a bulletin board stories of learners wishing to have their final products displayed.

3. Stimulate students to look at the outdoors from classroom windows. Have learners write a poem dealing with their observations. The involved students may choose which poem to write. Among others, the following types of verse may be written: free verse, couplet, triplet, quatrain, limerick, tanka, haiku, or diamante.

4. Put several unfamiliar objects in a bag. Have students individually feel the unseen items. A paragraph might then be written by learners, individually or collectively, on how the felt objects might be utilized.

5. Stimulate pupils within committees to brainstorm as many uses as possible of a chair. Each hypothesis given should be recorded by a selected

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student within the committee. Respect for each use given is important.

Duplication of uses is to be avoided. No value judgment is to be made on any use presented. The committee having the largest number of diverse uses of a chair within an allotted period of time is the winner of the game.

Each learner may then choose three novel uses and write a related essay on new uses for a chair.

6. Newspaper headlines may be clipped by the teacher. Each student receives a headline and writes related content. Ideas presented in writing might be compared with those given by the writer of the newspaper headline.

Students individually might also be given a newspaper article without the headline. The involved learner then needs to write an appropriate headline. Later the student may check his/her written headline with the original headline as it appeared in the newspaper.

Each student needs to achieve in an optimal manner in creative endeavors. Novel, unique ideas are necessary for progress to continue in society, as well as on an individual basis.

THE WRITING CURRICULUM: CREATIVE VERSUS PRACTICAL

To what extent should objectives in the curriculum reflect novel, creative content written by pupils? Or, should writing activities largely emphasize what is of practical value? One can perceive the two purposes in writing at opposite ends of the continuum. In between points may well represent a combination of the two philosophies -- creative as well as utilitarian purposes in writing. There, of course, are degrees of creativity involved in all human endeavors, writing included.

Creativity and the Writing Curriculum

There are selected teachers who strongly emphasize that pupils rather continuously engage in creative writing. Thus, learners may be stimulated to write

1. diverse kinds of verse, such as couplets, triplets, quatrains, limericks, haiku, tanka, free verse, and septolets.
2. different forms of prose, including tall tales, mystery, adventure, biographies, autobiographies, myths, legends, and fairy tales.

In each creative writing experience, a variety of approaches should be utilized by the teacher to encourage pupil participation. The use of pictures, slides, filmstrips, films, discussions, explanations, excursions, and viewing the natural/cultural environment may well assist in setting the stage for creative writing. An encouraging, relaxed classroom environment might also guide pupils in freely expressing inner feelings, wants, and desires in writing.

Numerous reasons are given for emphasizing creative writing on the part of pupils. First of all, in society, there are many problems which need

identification and solutions. Among others, these problems involve pollution, unemployment, inflation, crime, slums, poverty, and extremism. Creative minds are needed to solve problems. Previously tried solutions might not have worked. What is a better way to develop creative minds than to have pupils engage in creative endeavors?

Secondly, the lay public desires increased emphasis should be placed upon the three r's -- reading, writing, and arithmetic. The second of the three r's may well be emphasized in creative writing endeavors. Ideas come first. However, the mechanics of writing can also be stressed in the final product. The mechanics may include spelling, handwriting, capitalization, punctuation, and usage.

Thirdly, pupils generally enjoy creative writing experiences. The feelings, values, and beliefs within a person must come to the surface to reveal creativity in writing. If creativity is desired and rewarded in the class setting, learners, in degrees, desire to reveal uniqueness in end products.

Fourthly, there are numerous means for learners to reveal creative behavior. Among others, dramatization activities, construction experiences, art projects, research activities, as well as creative writing provide means for learners individually to show creativity.

Utilitarian Purposes in Writing

There are educators advocating rather heavy implementation of practical writing experiences for pupils. Utilitarian purposes in writing might well include the following:

1. filling out job application forms appropriately.
2. writing friendly and business letters to communicate content.

3. writing a personal resume in applying for a job.

4. writing letters of application for a job.

In each utilitarian writing purpose, concrete situations should abound. Thus, in filling out job application forms, the involved learner should be guided by teachers and the business world to improve the end product. Learning activities must be as life-like and real as possible. Practicality in the curriculum is necessary so that school and society are integrated and not separate entities. As further examples, in integrating school and society, pupils with teacher guidance may write friendly and business letters to mail to receivers. Responses to the written letters should then be forthcoming.

Assistance that pupils need in the mechanics of writing may be emphasized as needed. Thus, the teacher assists learners in handwriting, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and usage to effectively communicate in practical writing experiences.

Why should utilitarian purposes receive major emphasis in the writing curriculum?

1. What is taught in the school setting should have value to learners. The curriculum then must emphasize learnings which assist pupils to be contributing members in society.
2. Pupils generally achieve optimally if perceived purpose in learning is involved. Purpose pertains to what pupils feel is useful presently as well as in the future.
3. Too frequently, learners have felt school learnings to be impractical and have little or no use. Retention of learnings is then minimized. Achieved subject matter used by learners indicates that a transfer of learning has occurred. A link between school and society assists

pupils to retain what has been learned previously.

4. Pupils need to be involved citizens in society presently. A utilitarian writing curriculum needs to be in evidence in the school setting in order that the future adult may be a contributing member in society.

In Conclusion

Most teachers, no doubt, attempt to emphasize both creative and practical writing in the curriculum. However, teachers individually may lean more toward one philosophy as compared to the other. There are selected questions which need answering to resolve the dilemma:

1. How can rational balance be emphasized between creative and practical writing?
2. Which criteria should be utilized to justify creative and/or practical writing experiences in the curriculum?
3. Which standards should be utilized to ascertain success in writing in adult society?

THE HANDWRITING CURRICULUM

Behaviorism, as a psychology of learning, advocates that teachers state measurable objectives for pupils to achieve. The objectives need to be stated and implemented in ascending order of complexity. A logical curriculum may then be in evidence. Thus, the teacher has attempted to sequence the ends so that pupils may achieve in an optimal manner. Ideally, each learner should be successful in attaining an objective before moving on to the next sequential goal. If a pupil is not successful in achieving a specific objective, the teacher needs to utilize a different teaching strategy.

Toward the other end of the continuum, the psychology of humanism emphasizes an open-ended curriculum. Within a flexible framework, learners individually may sequence their own experiences. Choices and decisions are made in selecting what to learn (objectives) as well as means (activities and experiences) to achieve desired ends. Learning centers and humanism harmonize well. Pupils choose which center and task sequentially to work on. A psychological curriculum is then in evidence.

In addition to the behaviorism/humanism dichotomy, there are additional issues in teaching handwriting. The balance of this paper will discuss selected issues.

Analyzing the Handwriting Curriculum

There are selected educators advocating rather heavy utilization of reputable textbooks in the handwriting curriculum. If teachers carefully follow the manual in the textbook in teaching pupils, scope and sequence has been predetermined for learners in ongoing units of study. Thus, objectives, learning activities, and evaluation procedures have been selected by the authors of the handwriting textbook and implemented by the teacher. Reasons given for emphasizing rather heavy textbook usage in the handwriting curriculum include the following:

1. textbook companies and writers have spent much money and effort in developing quality handwriting materials.
2. specialists in developing handwriting materials are in the best position to determine objectives, experiences, and appraisal procedures for pupils.
3. pupils achieve better in a structured curriculum. Using handwriting textbooks in teaching pupils assists in developing a needed structure.
4. teachers may utilize textbooks to provide for individual differences among learners. Thus, each learner might achieve at a different rate depending upon his/her skills in handwriting.

Opposing the utilization of handwriting textbooks in the curriculum, selected educators state the following:

1. handwriting skills should be taught as needed. Thus, as friendly and business letters, plays, poems, stories, announcements, and thank you notes are written by pupils, illegible handwriting may be diagnosed and remedied.

2. there should be ample input from pupils in selecting scope and sequence in handwriting. A predetermined handwriting program cannot do this. Weaknesses in handwriting for each pupil need to be noted. New learning experiences can then be chosen to take care of the deficiencies. Pupils with teacher guidance may plan objectives, activities, and evaluation techniques in handwriting.

3. pupils enjoy an informal, relaxed environment in the school/class setting. Heavy use of handwriting texts in teaching situations makes for a formal curriculum.

4. interests and purposes of pupils cannot be fulfilled in a logical curriculum emphasizing predetermined ends, activities, and evaluation procedures contained in textbooks.

How should pupil progress in handwriting be evaluated? There certainly are many issues here. Among others, the following need evaluating:

1. the teacher largely appraising learner progress as compared to pupils with teacher guidance evaluating handwriting achievement of the former.

2. general achievement in terms of pupils revealing legible handwriting as compared to detailed analysis of proper alignment, slant, formation of letters, proportion of letters, neatness, and spacing of letters within a word and between words.

3. handwriting skills being emphasized as a separate subject as compared to handwriting being stressed as a means to an end. In the latter philosophy, handwriting abilities are instrumental to achieving other goals, such as writing purposeful business and friendly letters.

4. teacher's sequential goals in handwriting being stressed as contrasted with interests and purposes of learners in being able to improve in the area of handwriting.

In Closing

Handwriting skills may be taught using behaviorism and/or humanism

as psychologies of learning. Handwriting textbooks may or may not be utilized in teaching-learning situations. There also are diverse means to use in appraising learner progress in handwriting. Whichever syntheses are chosen to implement a quality handwriting curriculum, the following questions need answering:

1. What can the teacher do to provide for individual differences among pupils?
2. What might the teacher do to stimulate interest, purpose, and meaning within learners to improve handwriting skills?
3. How can rational balance in the curriculum be emphasized between and among understandings, skills, and attitudinal objectives in handwriting?

LEARNING ACTIVITIES IN THE LANGUAGE ARTS

The purpose in writing the manuscript is to convey to teachers practical teaching suggestions in guiding pupils to achieve more optimally in the language arts.

Which experiences might stimulate pupil interest in the language arts? Try the following when readiness for learning is in evidence.

1. Let pupils brainstorm to generate ideas. No value judgments are made as each pupil contributes content. For example, learners may respond to the many uses of a wooden crate. Each response given by pupils should be recorded to avoid duplication of ideas. Relevant goals in oral communication and creative thinking can be imphasized in the use of brainstorming.
2. Have learners write business letters to order free and inexpensive materials from selected reference sources. Or, guide pupils to write friendly letters to give or send to friends and relatives. In each writing situation, pupils will expect responses to their letters. Purpose or reasons for writing might then be in evidence. Diverse goals in written communication can be achieved in writing business and friendly letters.
3. Guide pupils to continue a story started by the teacher. The teacher initiates the story with brief, interesting, introductory statements. Each pupil sequentially adds content orally to the continued story. Presenting oral content sequentially is a relevant goal for pupils to attain.

4. Give pupils a setting for a story. Based on the setting, pupils individually or in a committee, write to complete the story. Learners need to become proficient in developing settings, characterization, and plot among other ingredients, in story writing.
5. Let pupils listen to a musical recording. Each pupil might then be stimulated to write a poem. Diverse kinds of poetry may be written, including couplets, triplets, haiku, tankas, quatrains, limericks, and diamantes.
6. Assist individual pupils to practice reading a given selection before it is read orally to classmates. Help should be given to identify unknown words and to utilize appropriate stress, pitch, and juncture. Ultimately, in an audience situation the involved pupil should read content orally to listeners.
7. Challenge pupils to present an impromptu speech. The teacher may write a title or topic on separate cards for impromptu speaking. A pupil may choose a card and plan an extemperaneous speech. After a brief planning period, the pupil should present the talk to classmates.
8. Take adequate time to emphasize conversing with others during the school day. Conversation is the most frequently engaged in speaking activity by most individuals. Selected criteria may be developed by pupils with teacher guidance to encourage effective conversation among participants.

9. Guide pupils to become proficient in discussing content. In society, problems are indentified and discussed. In the school and class setting, learners also need to identify relevant questions and discuss appropriate solutions.

10. Have pupils learn to introduce themselves properly to others. Also, learners should become proficient in introducing a new classmate or stranger to others in the class setting. Something interesting should be said about persons being introduced to each other. A smooth transition might then occur from the making of introductions to conversing with those being introduced.

Each pupil needs to be challenged to learn as much as individual capabilities permit.

READING INSTRUCTION, THE PUPIL, AND THE TEACHER

The ability to read well is certainly an asset to any individual. In the school setting, people engage in many reading activities in different curriculum areas such as in social studies, science, mathematics, and the language arts. It almost seems as if success in school depends on the pupil's ability to read with comprehension.

There are many kinds of learning activities available to guide pupils in learning, including the use of films, filmstrips, slides, recordings, fieldtrips, pictures, models, charts, graphs, educational television, and the use of the overhead projector. Thus, in all reality, pupils could learn much in each curriculum area without possessing proficient skills in reading. In fact, a nonreader could achieve at a high level in the school setting using other learning activities than reading. However, a major goal of instruction must be to help all pupils achieve to their own optimal level in reading. Situations in life demand that individuals read content in a meaningful way to meet requirements in society.

Reading and the Pupil

There are many situations that need to be avoided in the school setting when teachers guide pupils in learning activities involving reading.

1. All pupils in a class should not be at the same place at the same time when reading content from any single textbook. Each pupil is at a different level of achievement as compared to others in the class setting.

2. A negative competitive environment in class should not be encouraged. For example, from tests that are given over content that pupils have read, the top achievers receive A grades, followed by the next best achievers obtaining B grades,

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and so on. A gifted or talented student then may receive an A grade with very little effort involved. He or she is an avid, proficient reader of content. A slow learner may put forth much effort in reading content but cannot compete against gifted and talented learners in comprehending ideas from print. This pupil then may recveive a D or F grade. The use of grade cards in reporting pupil's progress to parents has many weaknesses. It is indeed a problem for the teacher to know how to grade pupil achievement in the school setting.

3. Teachers reprimand and scold individual pupils who do not read as well as others in the class. These pupils may even by labeled as being "lazy", "indifferent", or "The don't care type". For most of these pupils, reading has not been an enjoyable experience. These learners have not been successful in the skill area of reading. The negative labeling of pupils adds to their burdens already being experienced in the school setting.

Improving Reading Instruction

There is much that the teacher can do to help pupils increase their skill in reading.

In the curriculum area of reading in the elementary school and in literature courses on the junior and senior high levels, individualized reading may benefit many pupils. Many good, interesting library books are necessary in the class setting when implementing an individualized reading program. These library books must be on different levels of complexity; thus, a sixth grade pupil selects an interesting library book written approximately on the fourth grade achievement level. This represents the highest present achievement level in reading for this pupil. Gifted and talented pupils in the same class may select library books written for students who read on the ninth or tenth grade level. Each student must feel successful and enjoy learning experiences involving reading. If students do

not like reading as a learning experience, they may minimize or shun this important avenue of learning. To evaluate pupil achievement in reading content from a library book, the teacher could discuss main ideas comprehended by the pupil in a conference in the class setting.

Textbooks on different reading levels may be used by students as learning activities in different curriculum areas in the school setting. Thus, a slow learner may read relevant content and yet understand what is being read due to the textbook being written on his/her reading level.

If textbooks in different curriculum areas such as science, social studies, mathematics, and literature, are not written on different levels of complexity, good readers may read content orally to less able readers as the latter follow along in their textbooks. Content which less able readers are to read may also be recorded by a skilled reader. As the recorded voice is played, students who are lacking in selected reading abilities may follow the written content in their textbooks.

The teacher must think of different methods of teaching whereby all pupils can gain relevant ideas from learning activities involving reading. If a pupil lacks proficiency in reading or is a very able reader, each learner should enjoy reading, obtain many ideas through reading, and feel successful in learning experiences involving reading.

READING IN THE SCIENCE CURRICULUM

Much emphasis is placed upon learners achieving well in the 3 r's (reading, writing, and arithmetic). The science curriculum can assist pupils much in achievement in the 3 r's. Reading is a method of acquiring subject matter in science. Writing is a means of communicating content to others. Mathematics can be called a language of science with its precise measurements to convey subject matter accurately to others. The balance of this paper will pertain to assisting pupils to do as well as possible individually in reading in the science curriculum.

Word Recognition and Comprehension Skills

For most learners, there will be new words to master in any reading assignment. Thus, it behooves the teacher to guide learners to see the new words in print prior to reading. The teacher may write these words on the chalkboard or on a transparency, clearly and accurately, in manuscript form. It is highly important to obtain each pupil's attention to see the words carefully. Each pupil must notice the configuration of words being introduced. If learners do not pay attention to the new words in print, the chances are less likely that the terms will be mastered. Selected educators recommend that pupils see the new words in sentences, rather than in isolation. Words do appear in content, rather than as separate entities in any reading selection.

There are selected issues needing discussion involving the science teacher's role in teaching other word recognition techniques in addition to the whole word method. These include:

1. How much emphasis should the science teacher place upon guiding learners to recognize unknown words using phonetic analysis, syllabication, structural analysis, and context clues? Regardless of the age level of elementary, middle

school or junior high school, and senior high school students, selected individuals need assistance in utilizing the above named word recognition techniques. Or, is it the sole responsibility of reading and English teachers to develop independence within learners to unlock new words?

2. How much assistance do learners need to develop proficient skills in diverse types of reading comprehension. Should the science teacher acutally teach comprehension skills involving reading to

(a) gain facts, concepts, and generalizations
(b) acquire directions, as well as sequential ideas
(c) solve problems
(d) develop appreciation and interests
(e) think critically, as well as creatively?

Learners need to comprehend subject matter involving reading, otherwise time is wasted and very little learning may occur in ongoing units and lessons. However, the science teacher might spend considerable time in teaching comprehension skills when there are numerous relevant facts, concepts, and generalizations that learners need to attain inductively/deductively in the science curriculum. There are learners who may not benefit from reading content unless word recognition techniques and comprehension skills are taught by the science teacher.

Philosophy of Reading Instruction

There are selected philosophies of reading that each science educator needs to consider. Instrumentalism, also called experimentalism, emphasizes that knowledge acquired is instrumental to solving identified problems. Never, as a whole, should science content be read for the sake of reading. Rather, science content from basal texts, workbooks, manuals, encycolpedias, and other reference sources is read to resolve problematic situations.

According to instrumentalism, a complete act of thought can be described as following a selected flexible sequence. Thus, first of all, learners with teacher guidance need to identify a relevant problem (or problems) in an ongoing lesson or unit of study. Next, data or information needs gathering in answer to the problem. Reading is a means of acquiring information instrumental to the solving of problems. In sequence, a hypothesis (or hypotheses) needs to be developed from achieved data. The hypothesis then needs testing. Reading is useful as a means of testing stated hypotheses. The ultimate result might be revising the hypothesis, if needed.

Toward the other end of the continuum, essentialism as a philosophy of education, advocates pupils learning basic subject matter if it is useful or not in the solving of problems. The competent science teacher then selects important facts, concepts, and generalizations for learner attainment in any reading activity. After the reading activity has been completed, the science teacher checks learner progress in comprehension. Essential learnings in science need to be developed by all pupils. What is basic to learn must be identified by the science teacher, alone, prior to instruction. These essentials may be announced to pupils prior to any reading activity when utilizing measurable objectives. After the reading activity, the teacher may measure, using tests and observational methods, if a learner has/has not achieved the stated goals. If a specific end has not been attained, a modified teaching strategy might then be used to assist pupils in successful achievement of the objective.

Followup Experiences

How might acquired learnings from reading be utilized? Instrumentalists emphasize that subject matter achieved be used to solve identified problems. Each problem needs to be realistic and life-like. There are numerous problems

in society that need identifying and solving. Problems in science involving society should be emphasized in the school curriculum. Thus, school and society are integrated, not separate entities.

To rehearse content acquired in reading science, essentialists might advocate, among others, the following followup activities:

1. The teacher discussing with pupils what the latter has comprehended.
2. Pupils being tested using true-false, multiple choice, matching, completion, and essay items to reveal comprehension.
3. Learners completing worksheets to reveal that which has been achieved.
4. Pupils outlining subject matter gained.
5. Oral reporting by learners of content read.

In Summary

Reading ability is a vital skill for all learners to achieve. Each science unit may make its many contributions in guiding pupils to become increasingly proficient in reading. The competent science teacher needs to develop adequate word recognition, as well as comprehension skills within learners. At the same time, pupils need to acquire vital facts, concepts, and generalizations in the science curriculum. Methods of attaining subject matter must also receive adequate emphasis.

Pupils live in world of science and must thus achieve vital understandings, skills, and attitudinal goals in each unit of study.

REPORTING PUPIL PROGRESS IN READING

How should learner achievement in reading be reported to parents? One means, among others, might be to utilize parent-teacher conferences.

Definite criteria need to be followed in conducting parent-teacher conferences.

1. Mutual respect toward ideas presented must be in evidence.
2. Adequate preparation must be inherent in the conference.
3. Parents need to have ample opportunities to ask questions pertaining to their child's progress.
4. The teacher can acquire much information in conferences about children to provide more adequately for individual differences in the class setting.
5. Agreed upon goals between parents and the teacher should be a relevant end result of the conference. The home and school must work together to assist each pupil to achieve optimally.

Reporting Progress in Reading

Which categories of reading progress need to be reported to parents in a conference setting? There are many facets of achievement which might be reported.

For primary grade pupils, in particular, adequate skills in word recognition techniques need developing. For example, each pupil should develop abilities to use phonics to identify new words. Thus, learner need to have interesting, purposeful, and meaningful experiences in associating sounds (phonemes) with symbols (graphemes). Pupils should be guided to avoid overgeneralizing on sound-symbol relationships. There are many words which are

spelled phonetically, e.g. ban, can, Dan, fan, man, Nan, pan, ran, and tan. There are also numerous words which lack consistency between graphemes and phonemes, e.g. through, cough, rough, and bough. Teachers need to have adequate data pertaining to pupil progress in using phonics to unlock new words. The resulting information might then be shared with parents.

A second word recognition technique to emphasize in the reading curriculum is syllabication. A pupil may be able to identify an unknown word after dividing it into appropriate syllables. For example, a learner may feel that "unlikely" is a new word. Detaching the syllable "un" as well as the syllable "by," the pupil might then recognize a familiar syllable "like." No doubt, the pupil has noticed the syllable "un" and the syllable "ly" in other words, e.g. unimportant--largely. Thus, the word "unlikely" is not new but a rearrangement of previously known syllables. The teacher may wish to discuss, with parents, pupil progress in utilizing syllabication as a technique to unlock new words.

A third valuable word recognition method to emphasize in the teaching of reading is to utilize context clues. When using content clues, the involved pupil chooses words which are meaningful and make sense in the sentence. For example, a learner cannot identify a word within a sentence, but tries a word or words which harmonize with the rest of the words in the sentence. Certainly, pupil progress in learning to use context clues can be reported to parents.

Other word recognition techniques which need to be developed by learners include using configuration clues (noting the shape and form of words), picture clues (using pictures on a page to identify unknown

words), and structural analysis (dividing words into component parts for recognition--prefix, root word, and suffix).

Merely identifying words correctly is not adequate in the reading curriculum. Pupils also need to comprehend and understand what has been read. Relevant information on achieved pupil comprehension skills can be discussed with parents in a conference setting. Which reading comprehension skills might be evaluated with parents of the involved pupil?

Certainly, it is relevant to comprehend important facts. Higher levels of cognition or thinking is based on factual knowledge. An adequate number of objectives in the reading curriculum needs to stress acquiring vital facts. A rather meticulous purpose is then involved in understanding specifics and details, rather than broader ideas.

Factual content acquired by pupils can be related and developed into generalizations. Each generalization attained by learners can be checked for accuracy. Thus, factual ideas need to support any generalization. A statement becomes a generalization if many specific items of information support the warranted conclusion.

Reading to follow directions carefully is important. Numerous learners like to assemble model airplanes and cars which require accurate following of directions. Working an exercise in a workbook or worksheet also requires, in many cases, careful reading of directions to complete the ensuing exercises correctly. In society, recipes need to be followed carefully so that a quality finished food product is ensured.

Pupils also need to learn to read to acquire a sequence of ideas. Frequently, individuals need to remember what happened first, second, third, and fourth in terms of ordered content. Practice needs to be provided so that pupils may attain sequential ideas in reading.

Reading critically involves higher levels of cognition. In critical reading, a learner separates what is factual from what is opinion. Being able to separate accurate from inaccurate statements also involves critical reading. Better decisions can be made by an individual if the ability to analyze subject matter into component parts is inherent. Too frequently, a reader accepts as factual all or nearly all content being read. Writers write opinions as well as factual content. Content may be dull and boring if only facts are written. A writer writing that a certain country or nation is picturesque is expressing an opinion. It is not verifiable if the nation is picturesque. A writer, intentionally or unintentionally, may write inaccurate ideas along with the accurate. The reader needs to develop skill to critically appraise content.

Purposes of writers differ in providing content to readers. The following purposes, among others, may be involved: to inform, to persuade, to propagandize, to present opinions, and to clarify ideas. Learners need to be aware of purposes or reasons involved on the part of writers in providing written content for others.

In a parent-teacher conference, adequate time needs to be given to discussing pupil progress in reading for a variety of purposes to comprehend content.

In Summary

Parents need to be informed adequately pertaining to their child's progress in school. Reading is the first of three r's in the curriculum--reading, writing, and arithmetic. Thus, the teacher needs to communicate to parents pupil progress in reading. Cooperatively, the teacher and parents need to develop a curriculum which assists each pupil to achieve optimally in reading.

RECENT TRENDS IN THE ORAL COMMUNICATION CURRICULUM

There are selected ideals which need adequate emphasis in developing optimal learner achievement in communicating content orally. Being proficient in oral communication can make for feelings of success on the part of individual students. How might a teacher guide student progress in achieving speaking proficiency?

1. assist learners to perceive purpose for participating in oral communication activities. Thus, a student might understand why a given learning experience is vital. With feelings of purpose, learners might well possess an increased energy level for learning.

2. arouse student interest in learning. Select learning activities in speaking which encourage active involvement by learners in the curriculum.

3. guide students to perceive meaning in learning. What is learned in oral communication must be understood. Experiences then are not vague, but possess content which is understandable and personal.

4. use diverse activities in oral communication. These include conversing, discussing, reporting, impromptu speaking, using creative dramatics and formal dramatizations, interviewing, utilizing puppets and marionettes, as well as show and tell activities.

5. appraise student progress in an atmosphere of respect. The self concept of the learner might well increase in being positive if he/she can perceive a need to improve proficiency in oral communication. A variety of appaisal techniques need to be utilized, such as teacher observation, checklists, rating scales, learner self-evaluation, and peer appraisal. Relevant criteria need to be utilized in the evaluation process in an atmosphere of respect.

6. reward students for revealing progress in oral communication. Each learner needs to experience success in ongoing lessons and units. Due to

capacity, abilities, and the learning environment, students will achieve at diverse levels. The teacher needs to accept each student's present achievement level and assist learners individually to achieve optimally. The involved learner, then, regardless of present achievement may receive praise if continuous progress is being made.

7. motivate students to understand and utilize diverse sentence patterns in oral communication. The patterns include (a) subject-predicate (b)subject-predicate-direct object (c) subject-predicate-indirect object-direct object (d) subject-linking verb-predicate adjective and (e) subject-linking verb-predicate nominative.

8. stimulate learners to expand sentences meaningfully in order to communicate content clearly. Means of expanding sentences include (a) use of adverb and adjective modifiers (b) utilization of subordinate clauses (c) use of compound parts in sentences and (d) utilization of appositives.

9. encourage learners to use appropriate stress, pitch, and juncture in oral communication. Within any sentence, selected words need to be pronounced louder (stress) then others to convey intended meanings. Also, each work needs to be pitched, higher or lower, depending upon communicated clarified content. Adequate pauses (juncture) need to be emphasized between words, sentences, and even among phonemes within a word.

10. emphasize student creativity in the curriculum. Thus, each learner may present unique, novel, and original content.

INSERVICE EDUCATION AND THE COMPUTER

With an increasing number of computers in the curriculum, staff development becomes important. Societal trends emphasize a continual emphasis being placed upon the utilization of computers in the business world, as well as in personal lives of individuals. The school curriculum must not be separated from society. Thus, the computer has a highly significant role to play in teaching-learning situations.

Workshops as Inservice Education

A theme for a workshop should be selected cooperatively by teachers with administrative guidance. The theme must reflect curricular needs of a school. One relevant need in the curriculum might well be computer utilization in teaching and learning.

A first level of participation in a workshop should involve all participants in a general session. The leader and involved individuals should then identify problem areas or facets of computer use that should be studied. Criteria to be followed in the general seesion include:

1. All should participate and no one dominate.
2. Each participant should stay on the topic being discussed and not stray to unrelated areas.
3. Participants should respect ideas being presented. Minimizing or ridiculing ideas presented definitely hinders achievement in communication.
4. Ideas need to be presented clearly and meaningfully among general session members.
5. Content expressed by individuals needs to circulate among members in a group, rather than between the leader and a respondent in sequence.

Which problem areas involving computer use might be identified as relevant to pursue? The following are provided as suggestions:

1. Which criteria need to be followed in selecting computers which harmonize with objectives of the school and class?
2. Which standards need utilization in choosing computer software?
3. How might computers be utilized in problem solving activities in the curriculum?
4. How might programmed learning be utilized to provide for individual differences?
5. Which guidelines need following to assist learners to attain optimally in using computerized drill experiences.
6. How might simulations and games involving computer usage assist students to develop decision-making skills?

After an adequate number of vital problems have been selected within the general session framework, participants may choose which committee(s) to work in. Each participant should select committee membership based on the following criteria:

1. Meeting personal needs to improve the curriculum in the class setting.
2. Promoting perceived purpose by the participant in solving vital problems in the classroom setting.
3. Stimulating interest in wanting to use computers to provide for individual differences.
4. Developing an attitude of wishing to utilize computers effectively in ongoing lessons and units of study.

An adequate number of reference sources need to be available to assist workshop participants to secure needed information in the solving of problems. These reference sources may include testbooks, periodical articles, pamphlets, films, slides, filmstrips, transparences, and illustrations. Proficient consultant and resource personnel also need to be available to participants in the solving of problematic situations.

In addition to general sessions and committee endeavors, individual participants also need opportunities to work on projects of their very own choosing. Thus, personal needs may be met in using computers in the classroom. A teacher, for example, may wish to develop his/her own programs for programmed instruction. Quality assistance needs to be available from an expert to guide teachers to develop their own programs of computerized instruction.

Achievements in committee work and individual projects may be shared with members of the total workshop within the framework of the general session. Whatever is achieved may, hopefully, be implemented in teaching-learning situations in the school/class setting.

In Conclusion

Inservice training of administrators and teachers is necessary to optimalize computer usage in the curriculum. Only then might quality objectives, learning activities, and appraisal procedures be selected to challenge student achievement in the curriculum.